The Duty of a People's remembring their deceaſed Paſtors, repreſented and enforced:

IN A

SERMON

PREACHED

On the LORD'S-DAY *June* 27, 1762;

Subſequent to the Funeral of the late

Reverend Mr *THOMAS HALL*,

Who Departed this Life, JUNE 3,

In the Seventy-ſixth Year of his Age.

By *JOHN CONDER.*

Publiſhed at the Requeſt of the Church of which he was Paſtor;

WITH

A DEDICATION *to the ſaid* CHURCH.

PSALM CXII. 6.

The Righteous ſhall be in everlaſting Remembrance.

LONDON:

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BRITISH MUSEUM

TO THE

CHURCH of *CHRIST*

Late under the PASTORAL CARE of

The Reverend Mr *THOMAS HALL*,

LONDON.

Dear Brethren and Friends,

THE remove of your late excellent and aged Paſtor by death, was a providence which deſerved a moſt ſerious attention and improvement; and that mournful event was very pertinently and agreeably improved in a funeral Diſcourſe preached the Lord's-day after the interment, by my reverend and worthy Brother *Winter*.—This kind and ſeaſonable labour of love hath, by your unanimous deſire, been ſince made public: my rooted veneration and eſteem for our deceaſed Father and Friend, and my preſent relation and chriſtian affection to You, ſeemed to demand my ſpecial attention alſo to the affecting providence: both duty and decency prompted me to pay my ſmall mite of public reſpect to the memory of One who had been ſo deſervedly dear to me in life; and my aim was to

do it in ſuch a manner as might at the ſame time, with the divine bleſſing, adminiſter ſome ſeaſonable hints of inſtruction to the hearers.

Every *privilege* with which we are bleſſed, and every *providence* with which we are exerciſed, hath ſome ſpecial *duty* with which it is immediately connected, and to which are required the Chriſtian's ſpecial attention and regard. What the ſpecial duty is, to which God by the preſent providence is calling this Church and Congregation, it is one great end of the enſuing Diſcourſe to repreſent.—To recount the excellencies and accumulate the praiſes of thoſe that are gone, in the ſpirit and ſtrain of flattery and pride, is both a folly and a ſin: but a ſober chriſtian remembrance of their worth, and uſefulneſs in their generations to the glory of God, and our own ſpiritual inſtruction and imitation, is every way worthy the Chriſtian, and a duty required at his hands: for ſuch a retroſpect upon God's paſt dealings and diſpenſations with communities, as well as individuals, greatly ſerves to quicken and animate us in our courſe, and to inſpire our hearts with the warmeſt ſentiments of love and gratitude, and perſevering obedience.

I flatter myſelf it will not be without its uſe, as well as entertainment, to ſet before you a brief

a brief history of Providence concerning you as a Church of Christ, from your first formation; as I apprehend it will greatly tend, by the divine blessing, to evince the special obligations you are under to abound in this duty.

It is now more than a century since this congregational Church was first gathered and formed, according to the order of the Gospel, under the ministry and assistance of that judicious and godly Divine Mr *Thomas Brooks*, several of whose plain but highly edifying tracts are yet in the hands of many, and have been greatly blessed to multitudes, for their spiritual establishment and comfort.

From the restoration of *Charles* II. in 1660, the Church, and this their first and faithful Pastor, struggled together with the inexpressible difficulties and hardships of the times, (persecuted on every side, yet not forsaken) until 1680, when it pleased God to remove him to a better world: his funeral Sermon was preached and printed by Mr *John Reeve*, who had been his particular acquaintance and companion in sufferings for conscience sake, by the BARTHOLOMEW Ejection 1662. Mr *Reeve* became his successor in the pastoral charge. But his ministry to the Church was of small continuance; the bitter spirit and rage of persecution which then prevailed,

terminated

terminated his public labours; it was his afflictive and trying lot, with many other godly Divines, to be impriſoned in *Newgate*, which occaſioned his death, and ſo he got above the ſtorm.—In 1686 things began to take a more favourable turn: God, who hath the hearts of all in his hand, commanded Liberty to dawn, though by inſtruments and means which called his perſecuted people to *rejoice with trembling*.

This year Mr *Richard Taylor* undertook the paſtoral overſight of the Church, and in the faithful diſcharge of this truſt he ſpent the remainder of his days. Mr *Taylor* was a man of diſtinguiſhed abilities and learned erudition; and in doctrine, converſation, faithfulneſs, and aſſiduity in his work, was greatly eminent and exemplary in his day. He has left this well-atteſted character behind him. "He was a valiant champion for the faith "which was once delivered to the Saints; "a zealous aſſerter of free and efficacious "grace in converſion, and of the righteouſ-"neſs of Chriſt alone, for our juſtification, "and all the other points of Chriſtian Doc-"trine which ſtand connected with them: "what he preached and printed was the "truth as it is in Jeſus; feeding his people "with the fineſt of the wheat; nor did he "ſhun to declare unto them the whole "counſel of God.—Moreover, his preaching

" and practice were harmonious; he never
" pulled down with the one, what he built
" up with the other; and his whole con-
" verſation and conduct were without guile
" and temporizing.—As he lived, ſo alſo he
" died in the faith, declaring upon his dying
" pillow, how full he then was of the com-
" forts of thoſe truths he had been enabled
" ſo zealouſly to preach and defend: adding,
" if it were poſſible to live a thouſand years,
" I would continue to preach thoſe truths
" I have done, and be yet more earneſt in
" the defence of them.*" The Church was bleſſed with the labours of this able Divine for more than thirty years, and in *September* 1717 he entered into his Maſter's joy.

This great and affecting loſs was mercifully made up, by God's inclining the heart of our late dear and worthy friend to come and ſettle with the Church.

In 1711 the Reverend Mr *Thomas Hall* finiſhed his courſe of academical ſtudies under the learned Dr *Ker*, and after ſome time he entered upon ſtated work at *Lavenham* in *Suffolk*. There his miniſtry was greatly owned to the converſion of ſouls, many of whom afterwards, by his inſtruction and concurrence, embodied as a Goſpel Church; but ſome things turning up in that place, which

* Mr *Taylor*'s Funeral Sermon by Mr *Nesbitt*.

which wore no favourable aſpect to his future peace and uſefulneſs, he ſaw it to be his duty to leave (though with great reluctance and heſitation) his former charge, and comply with this Church's invitation. In 1718 he removed to town, and not without the preſence and bleſſing of God with him: Providence herein conferred upon you another great and long continued bleſſing; for forty-four years he has been mercifully ſpared to go in and out before you: and with what judgment and firmneſs, with what zeal and affection, with what care and diligence, integrity and circumſpection, you better know by your own experience, than I can in words expreſs; and was I to attempt it, perhaps the above account of his valuable predeceſſor will appear as true a portrait of him as of its original, for whom it was firſt drawn.

On this intereſting hiſtory of providence towards you allow me to annex a few remarks: as,

1. What reaſon ye have to adore the power and grace of the great Shepherd of *Iſrael*, in protecting and keeping his people together in moſt ſcattering and trying times! We can have but faint ideas of the numerous difficulties and diſcouragements, which our dear and worthy forefathers underwent, during a more

more than twenty years perſecution for righteouſneſs ſake: great grace and firmneſs were neceſſary in ſuch circumſtances to hold faſt their chriſtian profeſſion without wavering; but by the grace of God they were helped to ſtand their ground, and to maintain their ſpiritual relation and fellowſhip in faith and love: amidſt the roughеſt winds and higheſt ſeas of adverſity they perſevered in their courſe, and weathered the ſtorm without making ſhipwreck of faith or a good conſcience. Churches walking in the faith, the ſpirit and holineſs of the Goſpel, may be injured and tried, but cannot be ſcattered and deſtroyed by the violence of men; the gates of hell ſhall not be able to prevail againſt them.

2. What reaſon have ye to adore the truth and faithfulneſs of the Lord according to his word! He hath promiſed to give his Churches Paſtors according to his heart, *&c.* and hitherto he has greatly verified his good word towards you. As ye were at firſt gathered and formed according to the ſimplicity, purity and order of the Goſpel; ſo through grace all your ſucceeding Paſtors and Miniſters have been faithful men and like-minded; who have taught the ſame things, been zealous for the ſame faith, actuated by the ſame ſpirit, and have walked in the ſame ways, to the end of their converſation among you. No advancers of divers and ſtrange doctrines, not tainted

with the affectation of ſingularity, nor infected with the *Athenian* itch of hearing and propagating ſome new thing; from which ſource the worſt of evils have ſprung up in many of the Churches of Chriſt, to their greateſt diſcouragement, diſſipation, if not deſtruction and ruin: it has been your almoſt *ſingular* mercy, and for which you can never be enough thankful, to have been kept entirely free from trials and miſchiefs of this kind.

3. You have reaſon farther, to admire divine goodneſs and care, for that uninterrupted union and peace which has ſubſiſted among yourſelves. Ye have been bleſſed with Paſtors, who were friends and ſolicitous promoters of peace and harmony, as well as of truth, in their day: and it has been their mercy to watch over a loving and united flock. Where there are envyings, jealouſies, ſtrifes and animoſities, the Adverſary of ſouls takes the moſt dreadful advantages; but, through grace, he has not been ſuffered to ſow the tares of diſſention and ſchiſm among the wheat: prize it as an unſpeakable privilege, that, even to this day, you have happily continued ſtrangers to theſe things, and that there is no particular call for the exhortation, *Let brotherly love continue.* The two grand ligaments to chriſtian communion and proſperity are Faith and Love, which is in Jeſus Chriſt. Without theſe it is impoſſible for things to

go

on well; but if theſe things be in you, and abound, ye will not be barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of Chriſt.

As to your preſent proviſion and proſpects, I can only ſay, the ſincereſt eſteem and ſympathy for your Paſtor, under his increaſing weight of infirmities and years, and the like affection and concern for your continued edification, induced me chearfully to comply with your repeated requeſt to take an overſight of you in the Lord. And a firm perſuaſion of the truth and importance of thoſe Goſpel doctrines you have been hitherto taught, a ſolicitous deſire to continue that harmony and peace you have hitherto enjoyed, together with the experience I have hitherto had of your chriſtian candour, friendſhip and eſteem, greatly engage my warmeſt prayers and endeavours, according to the meaſure of the gift of Chriſt, to promote your beſt and everlaſting Intereſts. That which gives the greateſt pain (next to a ſenſe of much inſufficiency) is, that neither health, nor ſituation, will admit of that entire attendance to your ſervice, which otherwiſe both duty and inclination would warmly engage to. However, the reſidue of the Spirit is with the Lord, and I truſt, through your prayers, and the continual ſupplies of all-ſufficient grace from Chriſt the head, I ſhall be enabled to attend to the moſt eſſential branches of this weighty and important charge, and in

ſome meaſure to walk in their ſteps, who, through faith and patience, are now gone to inherit the promiſes.

As to the preſent publication, when my worthy Brother favoured us with his kind and acceptable labour of love, never did it enter my moſt diſtant thoughts to follow him to the preſs: nor ſhall I eaſily reconcile myſelf to the propoſal of doing again, what had been already ſo well done; but upon your repeated ſolicitations on this head, as it gives me an opportunity of publicly teſtifying my cordial affection for you, my concern for the intereſt of the Goſpel among you, and my readineſs to ſerve and even gratify you in whatever I am able: Conſidering alſo, it is not a conduct entirely unprecedented, I have now complied, tendering this as a ſmall expreſſion of my love, and of my cordial deſire in all things to promote your beſt intereſts and proſperity.

Your unfeigned friend and ſervant in the Goſpel,

JOHN CONDER.

A People's Duty to remember their deceased Paſtors.

Heb. XIII. 7.

Remember them which have the rule over you, who have ſpoken unto you the word of God: whoſe faith follow, conſidering the end of their converſation.

ORDINANCES and Providences are the two grand appointments for your inſtruction to ſalvation: they have each of them a voice, and it becomes the Chriſtian to liſten to it, and to aim at a ſolid and ſuitable improvement thereof. The late providence of God, in taking to himſelf your aged and honourable Miniſter and Paſtor, you may eaſily conceive, hath directed my thoughts upon this text of Scripture: for though that ſolemn event hath been very ſuitably and ſeaſonably improved, in a funeral Diſcourſe, by a worthy Brother in the Miniſtry, yet my relation and affection to you demand from me a few plain ſtrictures, on ſo affecting a ſubject. The death of Miniſters is in all caſes a ſolemn event, as it beſpeaks a breach made, which is of a public and general concern. And when God removes ſuch as have

have been long and eminently faithful, exemplary and uſeful in their ſtation, it beſpeaks a Church's loſs: a loſs which is ſeldom *preſently*, and too often *never* entirely made up. Indeed to the aged ſervant, whoſe years and ſtrength are exhauſted, and worn out in his Maſter's ſervice, leave to retire, and go to reſt, is a merciful and gainful diſpenſation; yet to them that are left behind, it hath the nature of a *rebuke*, which calls for their moſt ſolemn and devout regards.

Now as people owe a duty to their ſpiritual Guides when living, ſo there is ſuch a thing as duty (not indeed to them, but) to God on their account, after they are gone: this, unleſs I am greatly miſtaken, is the duty inculcated and enforced in our text. As the words lie indeed in our tranſlation, it ſeems to ſpeak of their Inſtructors and Guides who were ſtill alive; *remember them which have the rule over you.* And the term [ηγουμενων] taken as a participle of the preſent tenſe, expreſſes no leſs; but the beſt of critics have obſerved it is moſt frequently uſed as a *noun*, denoting a relation or office, without any manner of reference to the time when it is diſcharged: thus in *Matt.* ii. 6. *Thou Bethlehem—art not the leaſt among the princes of Judah; for out of thee ſhall come a Governor that ſhall rule my people Iſrael:* and *Acts* xv. 22. *Judas* and *Silas* are called *chief men*, or principal perſons, *among the brethren.* In this chapter the word is three times uſed to expreſs office in the Church, Biſhops, Paſtors or Leaders, who preſide in the Church, and take the lead in worſhip and diſcipline.

Now that their preſent Officers and Rulers cannot be intended in the text is moſt evident, (ſays a judicious Expoſitor *) becauſe the Apoſtle afterwards

* Vide Dr *Owen*, Exp. in loc.

wards gives the Church a precept in reſpect to them, very diſtinct from this, and ſuited to the caſe of ſuch as were yet alive and preſent with them, *ver.* 17. *Obey them that have the rule over you*; former Guides are to be remembered, preſent Guides are to be obeyed. Moreover, the Apoſtle ſpeaks of them as perſons, who had in times paſt diſpenſed the Goſpel among them, and not as thoſe that continued to do ſo; they having at that time received or arrived at the end of their converſation in this world. So that the reſt of the verſe plainly declares theſe holy and worthy men were at that time dead and gone; therefore the Church are exhorted to *remember* them, and their doctrine—to imitate them, or to be followers of their faith—and repeatedly to conſider the end and iſſue of their lives, and converſations while among them. Nor is any thing clearer than that the end here ſpoken of, is the end through grace they *made** when they came to finiſh their courſe, and not merely the end they aimed at in the diſcharge of their Miniſtry. So that the doctrine I am fully warranted to raiſe from the words is to this effect.

Doctr. It is the duty and intereſt of a people, who have loſt a faithful Paſtor, to retain long upon their minds and memories, what his work, his faith, his converſation, and his end were among them: or, Our faithful Guides deſerve to be long remembered by us, after God in his providence hath removed them from us. — This is the grave and weighty truth I would at this time attempt to illuſtrate, and improve for my own and your edification. And here let us briefly attend to the following particulars.

I. Here

* ἐκβασιν ἀναστροφῆς.

I. Here is the ſacred character and work of the perſons ſpoken of while they lived: They had the rule over the Church, and ſpake the word of God to it.

II. The duty preſcribed us by the great Head of the Church, upon his removing ſuch by death.

III. Make ſome Application of the ſubject to the preſent providence.

It is regular, and may be uſeful to take a little notice,

I. Of the ſacred character and work of the perſons ſpoken of while they lived: and this is expreſſed in two things — They were ſuch as had borne rule—and had ſpoken the word of God to the people.

1. The firſt thing aſſerted of them is, that they had been known as Rulers or principal perſons in the Church of God. The Miniſtry is an ordinance of God: it is a work of office and honour, and the term, as here applied to Church matters, beſpeaks no leſs. Its ſignification is of large extent, and is applied to various relations and offices among men, which, by juſt alluſion, figure out the nature and importance of the work we are engaged in, for the ſervice of your ſouls. Thus for inſtance, your Miniſters are your *Guides:* their commiſſion and office is to guide you by wholeſome inſtruction: and the inſtructions we give are all meant for your ſpiritual and everlaſting good. Our buſineſs and concern, by the aſſiſtance and bleſſing of the Spirit of all grace, is to lead you into the knowledge of all ſaving truth, and to guide your feet in the paths

of

of peace. Faithful Miniſters are in reality, what the Apoſtle tells us the conceited Phariſees were in pretence, *Guides of the blind, lights to them that ſit in darkneſs, inſtructors of the fooliſh, and teachers of babes* *. As inſtruments in the hand of Chriſt, they are employed as *Moſes* was, to conduct God's people out of myſtical *Egypt*, that is, a ſtate of ſinful darkneſs and bondage; to recover them from under the dominion of myſtical *Pharaoh*, that is, the Devil; and to guide their ſteps through the difficulties and dangers of a pathleſs wilderneſs, (and ſuch have all the Saints found the preſent evil world to be) until they paſs through the waters of *Jordan*, and arrive, by the power of victorious grace, to the heavenly *Canaan*, the true land of promiſe and delight. It is an unſpeakable mercy when God grants, and continues for a length of time, ſuch able and conſcientious Guides of our faith and practice.

The word moreover ſignifies Captains, or Leaders in a military way, ſuch as go before the people to reſiſt and encounter the enemies of your faith and your ſalvation; who, as they have the poſt of higheſt honour, ſo they have that which is of the greateſt truſt, and the greateſt danger. Godly Miniſters in all ages have been the chief butts of a profane and wicked world: they, of all others, are moſt expoſed to the hatred and malignity, the ſcoffs and cruel mockings, and, as often as they have opportunity, to the rougher handlings of the enemies of Chriſt and his Goſpel; but all theſe things are patiently endured, for yours and the Goſpel's ſake, by thoſe that obtain mercy to be found faithful.

In a word, they are ſpiritual *Rulers* or *Governors* under their great Lord and Maſter, in the Church of

* Rom. ii. 19.

God: receiving their inſtructions from his Word, they rule in his fear, that is, they intereſt themſelves in the order, diſcipline and government of the flock of Chriſt, for its ſpiritual edification and good. And this they do, not as lords over God's heritage, not with an imperious and dictatorial ſpirit, as meaning to raiſe themſelves above control, and to make their own will and humour the law and rule of every public meaſure. The authority which Miniſters receive from Chriſt, is mild and gentle like its ſource. An epiſcopacy they have, but it is that of careful faithful Stewards in the houſe, whoſe overſight and ſuperintendency is entirely for the family's ſupply and good order: they provide againſt its wants, and watch againſt its dangers. Their concern does not lie in mens properties and poſſeſſions, but with their perſons, their ſouls, that they may be nouriſhed and fed, guarded and kept, and in the end ſaved with an everlaſting ſalvation; and in theſe things they watch for your ſouls as thoſe that muſt give an account.

A government they alſo exerciſe, but it is a kind and a laborious one, wherein they ſeek not yours, but you: ſeek not to gain an aſcendency over men's conſciences, but to be of ſervice to their ſouls. They govern only by being Inſtructors and Examples, ſeeking not their own honour but the honour of their Lord, and in nothing acting by their own authority, but altogether by His. And theſe (as one expreſſes it) are the beſt Rulers in the houſe of God, who exemplify the bowels of a Father, the vigilancy of a Shepherd, the faithfulneſs of a Steward, and the labours of the Huſbandman: who uſe the familiarity of a Brother, and the tenderneſs and generoſity of a loving and kind Friend, in all their work and ſervice for precious ſouls. And he, who is intent as he ought to be on ſo momentous

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and complicated a charge, ſeeks only to be uſeful, and leaves his eaſe, his honour, and his reward, altogether with his Maſter and Lord. — All theſe things ſeem naturally to ariſe from a due conſideration of the term here uſed. But,

2. The Apoſtle farther deſcribes them, by the great and leading branch of their office, their ſpeaking the word of God. *Who have ſpoken to you the word of God*; and certainly, this is a moſt leading and important article of miniſterial work! The Apoſtle *Paul*, it is certain, thought it ſo, and therefore left every thing elſe to others, that all his time and his ſtrength might be employed herein. Accordingly he gives it in moſt ſolemn charge to his ſon *Timothy*, *I charge you before God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, preach the Word* *: and he pronounces a woe upon the neglecters of it, *for neceſſity is laid upon me*; *yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Goſpel* †. This preaching the Goſpel is God's holy and wiſe ordinance, for mens ſalvation. For after that in the wiſdom of God, the world by wiſdom knew not God; it pleaſed God, by the fooliſhneſs of preaching, to ſave them that believe. The word of God is the word of faith, it contains *good tidings of great joy to all people* ‡; words whereby we muſt be ſaved. Hence it is ſaid, how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Goſpel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things. And that becauſe there is a wiſe and ſettled connection between theſe things; *faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. And how ſhould they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how ſhould they hear, without a Preacher? And how ſhall they preach, except they be ſent* ‖?

* 2 Tim. iv. 1. † 1 Cor. ix 16.
‡ Luke ii. 10. ‖ Rom. x. 14—17.

Now as to this momentous work your Miniſters are engaged in, ſeveral things are to be remarked.

1. Their commiſſion and furniture for their work. They who are warranted to ſpeak God's word, are commiſſioned and ſent by him, whoſe word they ſpeak: *How ſhall they preach, except they be ſent?* Men may call, ordain, and ſend forth thoſe into the Miniſtry whom God never calls: and uncommiſſioned Preachers, of one ſort and another, ſeem to ſwarm in the preſent day; and ſwarm they will, while worldly advantage, or honour, or eaſe, ſtand connected with the name. But the great concern is to be really called and qualified of God; and without ſuch commiſſion and furniture, men had better be *hewers of wood and drawers of water*. Men may ſend thoſe out who are no ways qualified for the work: and many, like *Ahimaaz*, will be running, though they have no tidings from God to carry to the people. All the knowledge and learning which ſuch are furniſhed with from man, is comparatively but hay and ſtubble, without higher furniture and qualifications from God. They who are not taught themſelves the truth as it is in JESUS, who have not been bleſſed with a ſaving, experimental knowledge of the things of God, can never be fit to teach others, ſo as to divide to every man a portion in due ſeaſon.

It is a ſpiritual and moſt weighty truſt to diſpenſe the faithful Word; *and who indeed is ſufficient for theſe things?* Was it not that they whom God calls, he likewiſe qualifies and fits for it, and the reſidue of the Spirit is with him. And they whom he qualifies may humbly and chearfully hope for ſucceſs in their Maſter's ſervice; and their people may hope to be profited by them. Commiſſion, qualification and ſucceſs, are all alike from God.

2. The

2. The ſubject matter of their Miniſtry; The *Word* of God. It is the work of the Miniſters of Chriſt to preach the pure Goſpel, the truth as it is in JESUS; nothing but what is conſonant with, and ſupported by, the Scriptures of truth. Not the wiſdom of this world, the inventions and precepts of men, the wiſe maxims of politicians, the reaſonings of philoſophers, or the traditions and canons of councils; but the pure and uncorrupted and lively Oracles of God. *We are not, as many*, (ſays the Apoſtle) *who corrupt the word of God: but as of ſincerity, as of God, in the ſight of God ſpeak we in Chriſt* *. The ſum and ſubſtance is Chriſt crucified, Chriſt the power of God, and the wiſdom of God, in which all other doctrines of revelation terminate and centre. Through this word ſpoken God's mind is made known, his grace is conveyed, faith, repentance and other graces are produced and excited in the ſoul, the Lord Chriſt and free grace alone are exalted, while the loſt creature is recovered, pardoned, ſanctified and ſaved: and they that ſpeak not according to this word (ſays a grave Divine) ought to have their memories buried with their bodies. A mercy how great for a people to have been bleſſed with ſuch Preachers and Guides, as gave themſelves continually to Prayer and the Miniſtry of the Word; willing to ſpend and be ſpent in the ſervice of ſouls, freely and faithfully, without fear or flattery, declaring the whole counſel of God!

3. The tenor of their converſation in the world. God's Miniſters are faithful men, whoſe aim and prayer it is to live as well as preach the Word; to evince, by the tenor of their ſpirit and converſation, that they themſelves believe the doctrines they preach

* 2 Cor. ii. 17.

preach to others; and are in earneſt to make progreſs in the way they commend to others. It is ſad when Miniſters contradict in their lives, what they preach up with their mouths. Sad for themſelves, and ſad for others; for, by this means, ſinners are awfully hardened in their ſins, and tempted to conclude there is little or nothing in Religion: a falſe indeed and dangerous concluſion; but woe to thoſe Preachers that adminiſter the occaſion; for with greater juſtice, it muſt be inferred, that, notwithſtanding their office, they are yet in their ſins, *in the gall of bitterneſs, and in the bonds of iniquity.* He is God's faithful ſervant whoſe temper, lips and life conſpire and agree, in confirming and recommending to all around them, the reality, the power and purity of the Religion which they profeſs and teach.—But it is full time,

II. To conſider a little, the duty preſcribed us by the great Lord and Head of the Church, when he is pleaſed to remove our able, faithful and exemplary Guides and Paſtors to himſelf.

This is the main deſign and purport of the text, and with this view were my thoughts at firſt led to it, that, through the bleſſing of the Spirit, the late affecting and (to you) uncommon bereavement, might be improved to a ſpiritual and laſting benefit.—And here we have to obſerve, that the duty enjoined, is no ways conſiſtent with the ridiculous ſuperſtitious idolatries and fopperies of *Rome*. Our regard for thoſe who have done worthily in their day, and ſo deſerve to be long remembred by us, does not lie in a ſuperſtitious fondneſs for their relics, or the things they have left behind them; much leſs in our prayers for them, or worſhip of them

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as Saints departed. Theſe are awful and aſtoniſhing departures from the truth of the Goſpel, whereby God is robbed of his ſpecial prerogative, Chriſt the mediator of his peculiar honour, and the foulеſt perverſion of the text, and of the whole deſign of Chriſtianity, is introduced: which practices all true Proteſtants will reject with abhorrence.—The duty before us is purely ſpiritual, and, rightly underſtood and practiſed, of the greateſt advantage. There are three diſtinct parts or conſiderations of the ſubject, *viz.* the paſt relation and employment —the faith—and the converſations of the perſons intended. Accordingly the Apoſtle makes a triple diſtribution of the duty in hand; theſe believing *Hebrews* are exhorted to *Remember them*, that is, as to their late office and work:—to imitate them as to their faith and its fruits:—and carefully to conſider their paſt converſation, and its end.

But I think we may conſider the whole duty in hand as expreſſed in that one word, *Remember*, and all that follows is explanatory of the way, and manner in which we ſhould preſerve this Chriſtian remembrance of them.

Two things I would briefly ſpeak to under this head. What are the things which a people ought to remember concerning their deceaſed Paſtors and Guides.—And to what ends and purpoſes we are to cultivate and retain ſuch Chriſtian remembrance of them.

1. What things are to be principally remembred concerning them. Here the text furniſhes us with ſeveral things for anſwer. As,

Firſt, When the Apoſtle ſays, *Remember them that have ſpoken the word of God to you*, we are naturally led to recollect the tenor of their doctrine. Their doctrine and their adherence to it. This is

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the principal matter of our remembrance and regard. Thoſe whom God has ſent, and it may be, long continued to a people as their Inſtructors and Guides, whom he has ſucceeded and bleſſed unto them, to the conviction and converſion of many from the error of their ways; to the plucking of ſinners as brands out of the fire, to the manifeſt weakening of the kingdom of Sin and Satan; and to the increaſe, eſtabliſhment and comfort of the Church of God; ſurely they ought to be carefully remembred as to the tenor of their doctrine. What was the Goſpel they preached, what the truths they maintained and defended, what the ſpirit and manner of their addreſs, as inſtrumental in accompliſhing ſuch important purpoſes. All their ſucceſſes were from God: and if God ſucceeded and bleſſed them in their work, we have reaſon to conclude they ſpoke the truth in Chriſt Jeſus. Your faith ſtands not in the wiſdom of man, but in the power of God, and God's power goes along with his own truths only: and thoſe truths which God owns to our effectual renovation, ſanctification and comfort, we may ſafely adhere to with reſolution and zeal, however maligned and oppoſed by the Infidel and Profane. There is but one way of God's juſtifying and ſaving ſinners; and Chriſt has but one Goſpel for his Miniſters to preach. Old truths are tried truths, and beaten paths are ſafe: *Remember them that have ſpoken the word of God*, and their perſeverance in this ſacred charge. The Goſpel is not a matter of *yea* and *nay* *, but invariably the ſame: *Jeſus Chriſt, the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever* †. Wherefore God's own ſervants are not in their doctrine, this to day, and that to morrow; but ſtedfaſt in their adherence to the faith once

* 2 Cor. i. 18. † Heb. xiii. 8.

once delivered to the Saints: theſe things they maintain in their truth and importance, and dare not make a compliment of them, either to the frowns or flatteries of oppoſers.

Wherefore *remember* the tenor of their doctrine, *who have ſpoken the word of God to you.*

Secondly, It is your duty to remember the faith of thoſe, that have had the rule over you. By faith, indeed, we are ſometimes to underſtand the doctrine of faith, the truths believed; thus we are to contend earneſtly for the faith once delivered to the Saints: but, by faith here, we are to underſtand the grace of faith, for it is a faith to be imitated or followed. This part of the exhortation, therefore, leads us to recollect the gracious qualifications of our Guides; they were true believers themſelves, ſuch as walked by faith, and were enabled to conduct themſelves with a ſpirit and temper which indicated a ſound heart, as well as head, in God's ſtatutes. Faith is a leading and moſt neceſſary grace in the Chriſtian life; all other graces are connected with it and flow from it. Hope and joy, love and zeal, patience and reſignation, meekneſs and godly fear, all enter into the compoſition of a gracious heart; and Miniſters need, and are ſometimes favoured with, large and diſtinguiſhing meaſures of theſe fruits of faith: and where this has been the caſe, a people can never too much abound in this duty; for ſuch Miniſters are great bleſſings while living, and their memories ought to be precious to us when removed.

Thirdly, There is one thing more mentioned in the words, and that is, the tenor and end of their converſation; *conſidering the end of their converſation.* By converſation is meant, the external deportment and behaviour of a man in life, that which

is visible to all, and taken notice of by all, both professors and profane. The world may give us the hearing as to the doctrines we preach, and the faith we profess; but the great stress is laid upon our behaviour and walk: there they fix their eye, and thence they make their estimate. The gravity, sincerity, circumspection and care, with which God's faithful servants are enabled to conduct themselves in life, is the great and special recommendation and enforcement of their instructions. Hereby they are examples to their flock, and ornaments to their profession; and without this, all will stand for little or nothing, both with God and man. *Ye are witnesses*, (says the Apostle) *and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblamably we behaved ourselves among you* *. Ministers of this sort are amiable in life, and honourable in death; *for the righteous shall be* had *in everlasting remembrance*. Their conversation in the world, and their end, or closing of the scene too, will bear reviewing; and deserve our repeated and most devout consideration and regards. *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace* †. But,

2. To what ends and purposes are we to cultivate this lasting remembrance of them. Why truly for our own benefit and advantage. The good and faithful servant, who is entred into the joy of his Lord, is raised above the smiles or the frowns of this lower world; whether he was slighted or esteemed, neglected or followed, is remembred or forgot, are just the same to him, who is now entred into peace, and a full possession of all his desires.

But for our own sakes we are to abound in this duty; the glory of God, and our own greatest benefit

* 1 Thess. ii. 10. † Psal. xxxvii. 37.

nefit are not a little concerned in our ſo doing; for the moſt valuable ends and purpoſes may, through a ſupply of the Spirit, be anſwered hereby. This might be made appear by the mention of many things, for which our time will not now ſerve.—In general, Let them that have had the rule over you be remembred, that God may be glorified. To the glory of God let it be borne in mind, how mercifully you have been provided, how faithfully you have been ſerved, how ſignally you have been bleſſed and favoured of God. Have they, who went in and out before you, been bleſſed and owned of God to your ſouls? Give God the glory of all their ſucceſs. *Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but it is God that giveth* all *the increaſe*:—Here fix your eye ſtill, and let this be your dependence.—Again, Let them be remembred, ſo as to profit and improve by their example. Remember their faith, holineſs, conſcientiouſneſs, ſteadineſs, purity, love, ſo as to copy from them; walk in their ſteps, mind the ſame things, aim at the ſame mark, and the God of peace ſhall ſtill be with you.—In a word, Remember how they were helped to end or finiſh their Chriſtian courſe, Was it not in peace? In the faith of the bleſſed truths they had preached and maintained? And with an holy, humble confidence in God, as to the ſtate of their own ſouls; and the world of light, life and reſt on which they were entring? What a bleſſed encouragement do theſe things afford to us, to hold on our way, to perſevere in our courſe, and hope unto the end. Wherefore let us not *be ſlothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promiſes* *.

Thus are we led to the laſt thing propoſed.

* Heb. vi. 12.

III. To make ſome Application of the ſubject, to the providence we are under.

And as in all the forementioned particulars, the life and labours, of our late dear and valuable Friend and Father, deſerved remembrance; ſo the duty in the text comes with the greateſt propriety and force to every conſcience. This, however, muſt be diſpatched in two or three particulars.

1. The preſent providence calls aloud for your gratitude, thankfulneſs, and love to God for your paſt mercies. You have many things, to excite your moſt grateful remembrance and thankſgivings, on his account.

Bleſs God for his miniſtry among you, as to the tenor of his doctrine, his faith, ſpirit and converſation unto the end. He was a truly able, and valuable Miniſter of the New Teſtament. One that was ſtedfaſt in the faith, not toſſed to and fro with every wind of doctrine. It is of the greateſt miſchief and perplexity to a people, when the trumpet gives an uncertain ſound. But it has been your mercy, to be taught invariably the truth, as it is in JESUS. Your Paſtor was one that delighted in his work, and gave himſelf up entirely to it; he did not ſacrifice your welfare to his own indolence, recreations and eaſe; but was conſtant in his work, and took pains in doing good.

Bleſs God for the uſefulneſs and ſucceſs of his labours, among you. He perſevered in his work, and the Lord was with him; many of you, I truſt, will have occaſion for everlaſting thankſgivings on his account, and will be his joy, and crown of rejoicing, another day. You have many Inſtructors, but not many Fathers. Believers have ſpecial reaſon to bleſs God for thoſe, who have been inſtruments

ments of their firſt faith, and converſion to God. This he was, through grace, to many; of which you have been helped to witneſs a good profeſſion.

Bleſs God for the acceptableneſs and uſefulneſs of his miniſtry, to the Saints. Not only his ſtated, but his occaſional labours have been greatly owned of God: for many years he bore a part in thoſe public weekly Lectures, which have been carried on by ſome of our moſt eminent Miniſters in town; and with what advantage and ſucceſs, ſome of your hearts, through grace, can teſtify. In fine,

Bleſs God for the continuance of his life, and capacities for ſervice ſo long a time. Forty-four years God ſpared him to the ſervice of your ſouls. And though he was viſited with a moſt threatning paralytic ſhock to his conſtitution, twenty-ſix years ago, which interrupted his Miniſtrations for one year; he was reſtored to ſtated work again with conſiderable conſtancy, till within about a year and half of his death. This ought to be remembred with thankfulneſs and admiration, that ſo important a bleſſing ſhould be ſo long continued. Few Churches have had the like mercy.

2. The preſent providence calls for your humble, and diligent imitation of his faith, and manner of converſation in the world. *Whoſe faith follow:* Your deceaſed Miniſter was enabled, by grace, to lead a life truly exemplary, and worthy of imitation. He was well furniſhed with abilities, ſpiritual and acquired; the Lord endued him with gifts and graces ſuited to your greateſt edification. He was a judicious and affectionate Guide, an able and faithful Shepherd, a burning and ſhining light; there were many excellencies in him, ſome things indeed in him, you muſt never expect to the ſame degree in another. Such was his extraordinary and highly

edifying

edifying gift in prayer. As he was bleſſed with the ſpirit of prayer, ſo there was ſomething almoſt ſingular in his gift; with what variety, propriety and fulneſs, was he able to ſpread your particular caſes before God; and with what an happy talent was Scripture language introduced, and the ſenſe and meaning of Scriptures pertinently and judiciouſly applied to particular caſes. — Another great excellency of our deceaſed Friend, was a certain facility and readineſs at introducing ſerious and profitable converſation in all his viſits. There was, perhaps, as true a mixture of the profitable and the pleaſant in his ſtated converſe, as is likely ever to be met with in the ſame perſon: there was ſomething very grave and commanding in his deportment and addreſs; but ſuch was the ſweetneſs and pleaſantry of his natural temper, that the ſolemnity of his manner, ſerved only to fix the attention, to what was both uſeful and entertaining. His younger brethren and friends ſeldom paid him a viſit, without being ſenſible gainers, by his inſtructions and advice: indeed ſuch an happy vein of ſeriouſneſs and good ſenſe ran through his converſation in life, that even thoſe who were but imperfect friends to his religious tenets, yet reſpected his perſon, and valued his company and friendſhip. — He was alſo an unwearied promoter of harmony, peace, and a good underſtanding among his friends; and was wanting in no prudent and upright meaſures to promote it. In a word, he was a kind, affectionate and aſſiduous overſeer to your ſouls; ſtated in his work, frequent in his viſits (eſpecially of the ſick or afflicted) kind in his counſels, and truly ſolicitous for your beſt intereſts; and, to the laſt, he made your Chriſtian edification, proſperity and comfort, a part of his inquiry and care.—*Wherefore, brethren, whatſoever things*

things are true, whatſoever things are honeſt—juſt—pure—lovely—and of good report; thoſe things which you have both learned and received, and heard, and ſeen in him, do; and the God of peace ſhall be with you *. Once more,

3. The preſent providence calls for a renewal of your Chriſtian courage, confidence and hope unto the end. Conſidering the end of his converſation: And how was it with your deceaſed Guide in his latter end? Why, as he was enabled to walk before you exemplarily, ſo he was enabled to depart ſerenely and comfortably. There appeared to be no manner of ruffle, and diſcompoſure in the leaſt, upon his ſpirit; his whole frame on a dying pillow was ſerious and ſolemn; but at the ſame time eaſy and compoſed: though he had not exſtacies of joy, he had a ſolid peace in believing; his evidences were clear, as to intereſt, in covenant love. He had no temptation to unlearn his Creed, when he came to die; he lived and died upon the truths he preached. The very laſt viſit I made him, he chearfully declared he was quite eaſy in body and in mind; and while the lamp of nature gradually failed, he appeared to breathe his laſt, in ſweet and compoſed reſignation, and affiance in his God. Such an end is truly encouraging to thoſe that are left behind; as hereby God is giving freſh teſtimony to the truth of his grace, and the faithfulneſs of his promiſe.—Let this providence then, both quicken and teach us: by his preaching and example he taught us how to live, and now he hath ſhewn us how to die.

As to you, my Chriſtian friends, who are bemoaning a dear Relative, as well as Paſtor, removed; ſuffer

* Phil. iv. 8, 9.

ſuffer the word of exhortation: Let the remembrance of ſo valuable and indearing a relation dwell long upon your hearts; ye were witneſſes to much of his love, tenderneſs, kindneſs and concern for your good: ſhew your love to his name and memory, by walking in his ſteps. Be ye followers of him, as he was of Chriſt; and be much in looking up to his holy Spirit, for all ſupplies of grace and ſtrength, to this end; that, when ye alſo ſhall have done your generation-work, ye may, in like manner, fall aſleep, and ſo be ever with the Lord.

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